

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 232403
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:NEA/PAB:MHORNBLOW

APPROVED BY:NEA:JMIKLOS

S/S-O:LFLEISCHER

-----128217 140122Z /66

O 132225Z SEP 78 ZFF5

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0000

S E C R E T STATE 232403

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT VIENNA 08200 ACTION SECSTATE INFO PARIS
ISLAMABAD 13 SEP 78.

QUOTE: S E C R E T VIENNA 08200

NODIS

USIAEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: IAEA, TECH, FR, PK

SUBJECT: SMITH-JACOMET MEETING: FRENCH POSITION ON
CANCELLATION OF PAKISTAN REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT

1. SUMMARY: DURING GERARD SMITH MEETING IN PARIS
WITH JACOMET SEPTEMBER 11, JACOMET SAID FRENCH DECISION
TO CANCEL REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT WITH PAKISTAN
WAS FIRM, BUT FRANCE COULD NOT RPT NOT GIVE OFFICIAL
ASSURANCE OF CANCELLATION THAT US COULD USE IN CON-
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GRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS. GOVERNMENT STILL FEARS
SHARP ADVERSE REACTION IN FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION AND
TROUBLE FROM GAULLISTS AND THUS WILL NOT RPT NOT STATE
PUBLICLY THAT CONTRACT IS CANCELLED. FRENCH BELIEVE
AN ASSURANCE OF CANCELLATION GIVEN TO CONGRESS WOULD
ULTIMATELY APPEAR IN US PRESS. JACOMET URGED US TO SOON
RESUME PAKISTAN AID, SUGGESTING US DEAL WITH GLENN

AMENDMENT BY USING PAKISTANI STATEMENTS THAT FRANCE HAD CANCELLED CONTRACT. ON FRG-BRAZIL REPROCESSING CONTRACT, JACOMET SAID GISCARD MAY WELL RAISE SUBJECT WITH SCHMIDT AT AACHEN SUMMIT BY "ASKING QUESTIONS" RATHER THAN TRYING TO EXERT PRESSURE. SMITH AND JACOMET ALSO DISCUSSED PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITY. SMITH, ON PERSONAL BASIS, ASKED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF US-FRENCH TECHNICAL EXCHANGE ON THOSE ISSUES. DISCUSSION OF SOUTH AFRICA, TAIWAN, THE PROPOSED FRENCH REACTOR SALE TO PRC, IAEA-EURATOM NEGOTIATIONS AND INFCE REPORTED SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. EN ROUTE TO VIENNA FOR IAEA MEETINGS, GERARD SMITH MET FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS IN PARIS WITH ANDRE JACOMET, SENIOR FRENCH MFA NON-PROLIFERATION ADVISOR. ACCOMPANYING SMITH WERE ROBERT KELLEY, S/AS, AND WILLIAM SALMON, EMBASSY SCIENCE COUNSELOR. MFA'S PHILLIPE LOUET, HEAD OF NUCLEAR AFFAIRS OFFICE, ATTENDED ON FRENCH SIDE.

3. PAKISTAN. SMITH EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR FRENCH DECISION TO CANCEL REPROCESSING CONTRACT AND CONGRATULATED JACOMET ON HIS SKILLFUL MISSION TO ISLAMABAD. SMITH INDICATED US HAD NOT RPT NOT YET DECIDED ON TIMING AND CONTENT OF CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS. SMITH STRESSED THAT AN OFFICIAL ASSURANCE FROM JACOMET THAT
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THE CONTRACT WAS TERMINATED WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IN ANY APPROACH TO CONGRESS AND WOULD BE HANDLED CONFIDENTIALLY.

4. JACOMET DECLINED TO GIVE ANY SUCH ASSURANCE. HE SAID HE HAD TALKED WITH SOUTOU EARLIER IN THE DAY AND SOUTOU'S VIEW WAS THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, IN LINE WITH ITS DECISION NOT TO MAKE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT THE CONTRACT WAS TERMINATED, WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO GIVE THIS ASSURANCE. JACOMET EMPHASIZED THAT THIS DID NOT RPT NOT MEAN THAT THE FRENCH WERE AMBIGUOUS ON THEIR DECISION TO CANCEL. HE CONCEDED THAT THE FRENCH STATEMENT OF AUGUST 24 ON THE CONTRACT "DID NOT SAY MUCH." (NOTE: THE STATEMENT CONFIRMED THAT GISCARD WROTE ZIA ON AUGUST 9 "TO SUGGEST THAT THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMON MEASURES...TO HARMONIZE THE EXECUTION OF THE CONTRACT...WITH THE IMPERATIVES OF NON-PROLIFERATION AS DEFINED BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT....") IN RESPONSE TO SMITH'S QUERY, JACOMET SAID THAT GISCARD'S LETTER TO ZIA DID NOT RPT NOT OFFER COPROCESSING AS AN ALTERNATIVE. THE CONTRACT WAS TERMINATED, AND "WE ARE NOT GOING BACK ON OUR DECISION," JACOMET STRESSED.

FRANCE HAS NOT RPT NOT MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ANNOUNCING TERMINATION BECAUSE THE PUBLIC OPINION PROBLEM IN FRANCE WAS NOT RPT NOT "SOLVED" AND CHIRAC AND THE GAULLISTS WERE LIKELY TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF THE CANCELLATION IF IT WERE PUBLICIZED. JACOMET SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S GOAL WAS TO KEEP THE SITUATION--NOW "RATHER GOOD"--AS "QUIET AS POSSIBLE."

5. JACOMET SAID THE FRENCH BELIEVE THE US HAS SUFFICIENT INFORMATION ON THE CONTRACT FROM A NUMBER OF CHANNELS TO GO TO CONGRESS TO RESUME AID, "WHICH WOULD BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE FREE WORLD." IF CONGRESS WAS TOLD THAT THE FRENCH HAD ASSURED THE US THE CONTRACT WAS CANCELLED, THE ASSURANCE WOULD LIKELY
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APPEAR, SOONER OR LATER, IN THE US PRESS, IGNITING THE ISSUE IN FRANCE. AS AN ALTERNATIVE, JACOMET SUGGESTED THE US CITE THE STATEMENTS OF PAKISTANI OFFICIALS, E.G., ZIA THAT THE CONTRACT WAS CANCELLED.

6. SMITH PRESSED AGAIN FOR A FRENCH ASSURANCE, POINTING OUT THAT CONGRESS WOULD NATURALLY INQUIRE AS TO WHAT THE FRENCH HAD TOLD THE US ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE CONTRACT.

7. JACOMET DEMURRED. HE SAID THE FRENCH HAVE HEARD THAT ZIA MAY REPLY BY LETTER TO THE GISCARD LETTER OF AUGUST 9. SOUTOU BELIEVES THAT FRANCE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER WHATEVER ZIA MIGHT SAY BEFORE DOING ANY MORE THAN IT HAS ALREADY DONE.

8. SMITH SAID THAT TO WAIT FOR A POSSIBLE PAKISTANI REACTION WOULD JUST MEAN MORE DELAY. THE ASSURANCE WAS NEEDED NOW. IF FRANCE COULD NOT RPT NOT GIVE THAT ASSURANCE, THE US WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT BUT IT WOULD NOT RPT NOT MAKE THE US AID EFFORT EASIER. JACOMET GAVE NO SIGN THAT THERE WAS ANY POSSIBILITY OF AN ASSURANCE, AND DID NOT RPT NOT OFFER TO TAKE UP THE MATTER AGAIN WITH SOUTOU OR HIGHER FRENCH OFFICIALS.

9. ON THE QUESTION OF PAKISTAN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES, SMITH SAID THE US WOULD WELCOME MORE INFORMATION THE FRENCH MIGHT HAVE. SMITH SUGGESTED THE US AND FRANCE CONSIDER CONTINUING THE EXCHANGE OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION WHICH BEGAN EARLIER WHEN THE US PROVIDED CERTAIN INFORMATION TO THE FRENCH ON THE PAKISTANI NUCLEAR PROGRAM.

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10. JACOMET RESPONDED THAT THE FACT PAKISTAN WILL NOT RPT NOT BE RECEIVING FRENCH HELP UNDER THE CONTRACT MAKES ANY EFFORT TO COMPLETE THE PLANT MORE DIFFICULT. HOWEVER, FRANCE DOES NOT RPT NOT KNOW WHAT PAKISTAN'S INTENTIONS ARE. US EXPERTS HAVE BETTER INFORMATION THAN THE FRENCH. HE NOTED ZIA HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS IN HIS STATEMENTS AS TO PAKISTAN'S FUTURE COURSE. IN RESPONSE TO SMITH'S QUESTION AS TO THE STATUS OF FRENCH TECHNICIANS IN THE PAKISTAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM, JACOMET SAID THERE ARE TWO AT THE REPROCESSING PLANT SITE HELPING WITH THE "SHELL OF THE BUILDING." THEIR WORK IS NOT RPT NOT INVOLVED WITH SENSITIVE PARTS OF THE PLANT. JACOMET SAID THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S VIEW IS THAT THESE TWO SHOULD RETURN TO FRANCE "SOME TIME" BUT HE COULD NOT RPT NOT PREDICT WHEN. THEIR RETURN NOW WOULD NOT RPT NOT SERVE THE FRENCH DESIRE TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE. JACOMET UNDERTOOK TO GET BACK LATER TO THE US ON THE QUESTION OF A US-FRENCH EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION.

11. FRG-BRAZIL. ON THE FRG-BRAZIL NUCLEAR DEAL, SMITH SAID IT APPEARED NOTHING THE US COULD DO WOULD AFFECT THE SITUATION FOR THE TIME BEING. JACOMET SAID THE FRENCH HAVE NO NEW INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF THE FRG-BRAZIL DEAL. HE SAID IT 'MAY WELL BE' THAT GISCARD WILL RAISE THE MATTER WITH SCHMIDT AT THE AACHEN SUMMIT LATER IN SEPTEMBER. GISCARD WILL APPROACH THE ISSUE BY "ASKING QUESTIONS," RATHER THAN PRESSURING THE CHANCELLOR. SMITH

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS, MEETINGS, CONTRACTS, CAT-B, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, NUCLEAR FUELS, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY, U S CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE232403
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA/PAB:MHORNBLow
Enclosure: REPEAT OF VIENNA 8200
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N780007-0532
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780970/aaaacfrk.tel
Line Count: 206
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5eec5751-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1446966
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SMITH-JACOMET MEETING: FRENCH POSITION ON CANCELLATION OF PAKISTAN REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT
TAGS: TECH, MNUC, FR, PK, US, IAEA, (SMITH, GERARD), (JACOMET, ANDRE)
To: ISLAMABAD USIAEA
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5eec5751-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014